

# Notarisation and legalisation of documents: British Virgin Islands

Service area / [Corporate](#)

Location / [British Virgin Islands](#)

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Companies incorporated in the British Virgin Islands (the “BVI”) are often required to provide notarised and/or legalised copies of documents in the foreign jurisdictions in which they operate. This guide sets out the different features of notarisation and legalisation, including legalisation by way of apostille.

## Notarisation in the BVI

In the BVI, documents are notarised by a notary public. Notary publics have the authority to:

- certify the signature of an individual who executes a document in front of them;
- notarise a copy of a document as a true copy where they have seen the original document;
- notarise documents in a foreign language; and
- notarise original documents.

Once a document has been notarised, it can then be legalised if required. The word “legalisation” is generally used to mean the process by which a document is certified as valid for use in a country other than that where it is executed.

## Legalisation by Apostille

Contracting parties to the Hague Convention (the “Convention”), which includes the BVI, may rely on apostillisation as a form of legalisation. If a BVI company is requested by a foreign jurisdiction that is a party to the Convention, to provide a legalised document then the document can be legalised by apostille. Two steps are required:

- the document must first be notarised by a BVI notary public (unless the document bears the original signature of a BVI government official, for example a certificate of good standing or a certificate of incorporation of a BVI company); and
- an apostille must be affixed to the document, confirming the authenticity of the signature of the BVI notary public or the BVI government official. The apostille can be affixed by either the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the Registrar of the High Court, the Registrar of Companies or the Director of Financial Services.

In the BVI a document may be apostilled on the same day, provided it is delivered during the morning. Documents delivered during the afternoon will likely be available for collection the next day.

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A full list of signatories and dependent territories party to the Convention can be found at: [www.hcch.net/index\\_en.php?act=conventions.status&cid=41](http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.status&cid=41), the official website of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

### Further legalisation

Where a request for a BVI company or partnership to provide a legalised document comes from a foreign jurisdiction which is not a party to the Convention, then the apostilled document must be further legalised before the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the United Kingdom and then by the relevant country's consulate.

Carey Olsen can assist with the notarisation and apostillisation of documents in the BVI. Apostilled documents can be couriered to our London office for further legalisation in the United Kingdom if required. If you require any further information, please contact a member of the Carey Olsen team in the BVI.



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